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matter to touch on the age of ladies; but if Miss Louisa Pyne is now twenty-eight years old (having been born, as it is stated, in 1835), how could she have made her *début* "at ten years of age," and *afterwards* given concerts in 1841 and 1842?

We cannot conclude our notice without a word of praise for the admirable manner in which this book is got up; and drawing especial attention to the very excellent and life-like portraits which accompany it, those of Viardot Garcia and Clara Novello being about the best we have seen of these artists.

The History of the Violin, and other instruments played on with the bow, from the remotest times to the present. By WILLIAM SANDYS, F.S.A., and SIMON ANDREW FORSTER. London: J. R. Smith, and Addison and Lucas.

A VERY modestly written preface introduces this work to the public; and we have little doubt that the laborious research necessary to collect so vast a quantity of materials on the subject will be amply rewarded. The history of stringed instruments takes us back to remote antiquity; for the lyre appears to have existed as long as we have any records of the human race; but the introduction of the bow, or anything indeed resembling it, cannot with any certainty be traced; although it is probable that it originated in our own island, when the "cwrth" of the Britons—which very much resembled the Egyptian and Ninevite instrument—became firmly established here. Jean Rousseau, in a fit of enthusiasm for his favourite viol, conjectures that it was played upon by Adam, but neglects to afford us any proof that it existed even amongst the Egyptians; although he boldly asserts that they had a viol "with one or two horsehair strings, played on with a bow strung with similar materials." The musical instruments on the sculptures at Nineveh have no representation of any one played upon by a bow; and, indeed, we have no actual proof of its having been employed anywhere prior to its appearance in some of the oldest drawings of itinerant performers in our own country. The gradual development of the violin, which first appears in a pear shape, and with but one string, is exceedingly well shown; and great credit is due to the authors for the earnest manner in which they have worked. The usual obscurity seems to exist with regard to the Amati family; but it seems generally believed that the name became celebrated about the middle of the sixteenth century; and that Andreas, born at Cremona about 1520, was the first who made the Cremona violin famous throughout the world. The list of manufacturers—who may indeed be termed artists—following the Amatis, shows how much attention was at that time given to this instrument, and how thoroughly every minute point was studied, in order to attain that perfect balance in every part which it seems impossible to arrive at in the present day. We have plenty of violin makers, but a genuine production of these early manufacturers—if, indeed, such a thing is to be found—still bears its value in the market. The unqualified praise we can conscientiously bestow upon the historical portion of this book, makes us doubly anxious that the author should not be tempted to wander from the straight path he has chosen; and in another edition we should be glad if he would run his pen through everything not distinctly bearing upon his subject. For instance, in page 150, he asks why the rules of harmony should not be simplified, and then attacks those who "keep you at bay with hard terms." We do not say that harmony should not be simplified, neither do we affirm that there are not pretenders in this, as in every other science; but we do say that all this has nothing to do with the history of the violin. Other instances occur to us, but we do not wish to do more than point out what we consider defects in an otherwise well-digested work. Some very interesting letters of Haydn appear for the first time in print; and the illustrations throughout the volume are admirably executed.

On Monday, the 12th ult., Mr. G. J. Hiles gave his Lecture Entertainment, "Mendelssohn and the Popular Music of the 19th century," at the Pimlico Literary Institution; the vocal parts being sustained by Miss A. Hiles and Master Hiles. Mr. Hiles received most deserved applause in the instrumental portion, Ascher's "Sans Souci" meeting with an encore that could not be denied. The clear fresh voices of the children surprised and delighted every one; the boy, in Verdi's "Ever free," completely filling the large hall, while the girl was equally happy in "The first violet," which being encored, Macfarren's "Two Merry Gipsies" was given in an extremely arch and pleasing manner.

On Monday evening, the 18th ult., the West London Sacred Choral Society gave its second concert of the season at the Store Street Music Hall. Handel's *Messiah* was performed; the principal portions being sustained by Miss Annette Hirst, Miss Emma Boden, Mr. W. Evans, and Mr. S. Crome. Conductor, Mr. H. C. Freeman.

On the evening of the 28th of December, a concert of sacred music, consisting of selections from the *Messiah*, *Creation*, *Elijah*, *Theodora*, Mozart's *Twelfth Mass*, &c., was given in the School-room of the Commercial Road Chapel. The principal vocalists were Miss L. Newson, Mr. Bell, Mr. W. Garrod, Mr. Dixon, and a select choir of fifty voices. Mr. Edwin Potter presided at the harmonium, and Mr. J. R. Chapman conducted.

At the Special Evening Service at St. Paul's Cathedral, on the second Sunday after Christmas, the Responses were sung to Tallis's music; and after the third Collect, Goss's anthem, in E, "O taste and see," was performed. The musician-like four-part writing of this anthem presents few difficulties to the singers; and the devotional character of the composition was therefore fully felt throughout the congregation, as only those sacred writers can make their hearers feel who know that simplicity is in the heart of the truly religious.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

We cannot undertake to return offered contributions; the authors, therefore, will do well to retain copies.

A Notice is sent to all Subscribers whose payment in advance is exhausted. The paper will be discontinued where the Subscriber neglects to renew. We again remind those who are disappointed in getting back numbers, that only the music pages are stereotyped, and of the rest of the paper, only sufficient are printed to supply the current sale.

Notices of concerts and other information supplied by our friends in the country, must be forwarded us early as possible after the occurrence otherwise they cannot be inserted. Our correspondents must specifically denote the date of each concert, for without such date no notice can be taken of the performance. All communications must be authenticated by the proper name and address of the writer.

Brief Summary of Country News.

ABTHORPE.—A grand concert of vocal music was given by the Abthorpe Choir on Christmas night, in the large club-room at the New Inn. Mr. R. Cave, Jun., conducted.

ALTRINCHAM.—On Monday, the 11th ult., Mr. Henry Hiles, Mus. Bac. Oxon, gave a grand concert at the British School, Ashley Road. On this occasion he introduced for the first time here his celebrated blind pupils, Miss Taylor, late principal soprano of the choir of Henshaw's Blind Asylum, and her sister, Miss Elizabeth Taylor, the celebrated contralto. These ladies were admirably supported by Mr. Henry Allman, tenor, and Mr. C. R. Walton, bass. Mr. Hiles was the accompanist, and also solo pianist.

BATH.—On Sunday, the 27th Dec., at the New Roman Catholic Church of St. John the Evangelist, South Parade, Pontifical High Mass was celebrated by the Right Rev. Dr. Clifford, Bishop of Clifton. The musical portion of the service, conducted by S. Moorat, Esq., was Haydn's 3rd or Imperial Mass, with full band. The solo singers were the Misses Foote,